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ABSTRACT

Discussions in this paper concern: (1) some findings from observations of social interactions among children attending a national sample of Head Start programs; (2) the recommendations for research on socialization presented by Sowder and Lazar (1973) to the Federal Interagency Panel on Early Child Development; and (3) the significance of socialization research during the next decade, with particular emphasis on social class and ethnic relationships. In relation to (1) above, data collected at all E&R centers in 1967-68, using the Social Interaction Observation form, showed that children increase in socialization, and are more likely to increase in interactions with the same group during preschool programs. In relation to (2) above, a few of Sowder's more than 18 recommendations for further research on socialization are summarized. Sowder recommends research which: re-examines the issue of whether or not prejudice is entirely learned; through longitudinal studies traces the development of children's attitudes toward themselves and others and the relationship between developmental processes and environmental influences thought to be related to formation of ethnic and social class behavior; clarifies when conformity behavior is and is not damaging to the child's development and to achievement of harmonious group relations; and investigates of competition on child development, and the role which competition may play in hindering successful ethnic and social class mix in child care institutions. In relation to (3) above, socialization is predicted to be a key variable for "success" in the year 2000. (DB)

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CHANGES IN OBSERVED SOCIAL INTERACTIONS AMONG CHILDREN OF SAME AND OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS IN ETHNICALLY HETEROGENEOUS PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS[1]

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During the next 15 minutes or so, I will discuss three things. First, I would like to present some findings from observations of social interactions among children attending a national sample of Head Start programs. Second, I will summarize the recommendations for research on socialization presented by Sowder and Lazar (1973) to the Federal Interagency Panel on Early Child Development. And last, I'll comment on the significance of socialization research during the next decade, with particular emphasis on social class and ethnic relationships.

The findings I will present on social interactions in Head Start children have been extracted from a report prepared by the Systems Development Corporation (SDC, 1972). The report in turn presents data collected between 1966 and 1969 by a network of 14 university-based Head Start Evaluation and Research Centers. The "common core" measures from this massive, national data bank were analyzed by two independent contractors, Systems Development Corporation and Research Triangle Institute, between 1970 and 1972. The reports of these analyses are available now through ERIC/ECE, and a summary is in process.

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[1]Paper presented at the National Association for the Education of Young Children Conference, November, 1972.

The purpose of having two independent analyses of the same set of data was to identify what results would be robust over different methodologies.

In 1967-68, all E&R centers collected data on the Social Interaction Observation (SIO) form developed by Horowitz and Tyler at the University of Kansas, and also used by Reese (1972) in his experimental study of economic heterogeneity. The form required 270 10-second observations of each child in the class during free play periods, distributed in 15-minute segments collected (a) about two months after the children entered Head Start programs in fall, and (b) a second set of observations in late Spring. During the 10-second scan, all the interactions of the focal child with other children and with adults were recorded: who initiated the interaction, duration of the interaction, whether it was verbal or non-verbal, disruptive behaviors, and similar information. Through coding the identity of the interactees for each record and matching against a coded class descriptor list, the sex and ethnicity could be traced for each individual with whom a focal child interacted.

The resulting data on social interactions of children could provide many months of analysis; selected for extensive analysis, were verbal interactions, non-verbal interactions, disruptive behaviors, interactions with peers from other ethnic backgrounds. Opportunity for interactions was uncontrolled both in the programs and in the analyses. About 25% of all Head Start programs in the sample period were mixed: no one ethnic group formed 75% or more of the class. Most children, thus, were in a setting with one dominant ethnic group; however, while most classes

were not totally segregated, opportunities for other ethnic interactions were substantially less than for same ethnic interactions. As Table I shows, this unequal opportunity for cross-ethnic interaction is reflected in the distribution of social initiations: the median interaction was 1 out of every 27 10-second periods for same ethnicity peers, but 1 out of every 130 10-second periods for other ethnic peers.

Table I: Frequency of Social Interactions With Same and Other Ethnic Group Peers Over 270 10-Second Observation Intervals at Time of Initial Observations

Frequency of Social Interactions	Percent of All Sample Children	
	Same	Other
25 or more	8.5%	1.6%
20-24	9.3	1.8
15-19	15.4	3.3
10-14	20.5	7.1
5- 9	23.5	15.9
0- 4	20.8	70.3
N Children	1,507	1,177

Participation in Head Start was associated with increased verbal interactions with both children and adults and with increased interactions with children from other ethnic groups: for verbal interactions, from a mean of 39.5 to 44.3 ($t = 6.91$, $N = 1507$ children) and for other peer interactions, from a mean of 4.0 to 4.7 ($t = 4.59$, $N = 1177$). The mean for same ethnic group interactions increased slightly, but not significantly, from 12.9 to 13.4.

Several child characteristics were associated with initial levels of same and other peer interactions: older children, middle and higher IQ children, and Southern children had higher interaction rates than younger children, children with IQ's below 85, and non-Southern children. At time of entry, urban children interacted more with same ethnic peers while non-urban children interacted more with other ethnic peers.

With regard to increases in interactions, age and IQ were not differentially associated with gain; non-urban children gained more than urban children in same and other ethnic interactions, and non-Southern children gained more in same ethnic interactions only. Since disruptive behaviors were rare and did not increase, these changes may be interpreted as increases in children talking to and playing with other children, not as an increase in fighting or crying or "acting out."

Relative to child characteristics, situational characteristics played a more important role as associates of gains in interactions. Low class transiency (i.e., low pupil turnover) favored gains in both same and other ethnic group interactions among all children present for pre and post observations ($t = 4.27$ and $t = 10.3$, respectively). A low pupil-teacher ratio and less formal teacher education both were associated with increased same ethnicity interactions; lower teacher experience with disadvantaged youngsters was related to increased interactions with other ethnic peers. Most strikingly, low amounts of time spent in large muscle activity and high amounts of time spent in small muscle activity favored increases in other and same ethnic peer interactions ($t = 10.1$ and $t = 13.5$, respectively). Program content (e.g., emphasis on language materials and on dramatic role playing) was unrelated to gains in social interactions.

These findings give fascinating clues about the dynamics of peer interaction and about what happens in ethnically mixed preschool programs. Children increase in socialization, and are more likely to increase in interactions with other ethnic groups than in interactions with the same group during preschool programs. Opportunity to interact and familiarity play a more important role than program content: children need time to get to know each other (low transiency), and activities in which small groups talk to one another and work together are far more likely to foster interactions than are activities which are usually undertaken alone (e.g., riding tricycles and similar large muscle activities).

Sherman (in the discussion following the NAEYC presentation) suggests that (a) the inverse relationship between teacher years of formal education and increase in social initiations, and (b) the increase in adult-oriented interactions when 50% of the children came from families above the poverty guidelines as reported by Reese (1972) are both related to the higher value placed on child/child interactions by low-income people. Sherman argues that less formal education often means "paraprofessional," "neighborhood," and "low-income," and that the relatively low emphasis on child/adult interaction and high value on child/child socialization reported as characteristic of low-income families mediate both the 1967-68 Head Start national results and the distinctive socialization findings of Reese's experimental Head Start Study. Low-income teachers, by this interpretation, will support and encourage child socialization, accounting for the E & R results; the more "advantaged" children will shape teacher

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and child behavior by their demands (based on previous reward histories) for adult, more than child, interaction, accounting for Reese's findings.

These observational data, only barely analyzed, raised many questions for second-generation research: what "mix" of ethnic groups most foster such interactions? Would similar patterns be found for social-class mixes? Would changes in frequency of free-play initiations be related to the social quality of the interaction and to cooperative and competitive behavior in other situations? Would such early experiences transfer to outside of the classroom for the preschool children? Would durable effects be observed during primary school? Are younger children more or less likely to interact under these circumstances than older children? As Jencks (1972) has argued, social science research at present offers few guidelines for judicial and legislative decisions regarding the ethnic and social class integration. Deliberate gerrymandering and adoption of policies of convenience to maintain segregation not at issue: bussing or other approaches to ensure integration are. Jencks concludes that the hostilities aroused by so-called reverse integration (whites to black schools) will be counter-productive while demanding equal employment opportunity for adults is a more acceptable and, in the long run, a more valuable social policy. On the other hand, can a nation whose diverse people are brought up apart really learn to live together? The recent outbreaks of racial violence in military service are perhaps one indication that delaying integration until adulthood on-the-job may fail to take advantage of our knowledge of socialization processes, and of the early childhood years when we are, in Pound's words, "Two small people without hatred or suspicion."

There are, finally, methodological questions: there are no control groups in the E & R data, and the initial difference between the "other" interactions of older and younger children was 1.4 (4.7 vs 3.3), which is larger than the changes over the three or four months' interval of observation. A similar difference was initially observed for same ethnicity interactions (.5, 13.3 vs 12.8)and for gain (.5, 12.9 vs 13.4 from initial to final observations). Do these increases reflect a typical age-increment, which is relatively independent of the Head Start experience, or an effect of the Head Start experience?

Examination of the socialization consequences of ethnic and social class heterogeneity is among the 1973 Office of Child Development research and demonstration program priorities. Of particular concerns have been the possibility (a) that the emphasis on bussing to achieve ethnic equality of opportunity is less meaningful than achievement of social class equality of opportunity, and (b) the attribution of tensions, violence and disruption to racism when social class-ism might be a more accurate description of the psychological and sociological dynamics.

The experimental and research literature on the development of racial awareness and attitudes in children, and the consequences of different approaches to the melting pot is sparse. Even scarcer, in fact, almost non-existent is the experimental and research literature on social class awareness and attitudes in children, and the consequences of different approaches to social class integration. In most data, ethnicity and social class are confounded. In addition, the current

concepts of social class, as Herzog has so compellingly demonstrated, are out of date for contemporary realities. For example, the usual social class indicators (education and occupation of the head of the household) have repeatedly been criticized as inadequate controls for distinguishing social class and ethnic events, yet there have been only a few reports offering a better measure, and none is so widely adopted as the 1950's Hollingshead/Redlich index developed to differentiate a broad range of social classes, not to distinguish life-styles within the lower income group.

In Spring 1972, the Interagency Panel on Early Childhood Research and Development, at the request of the Office of Child Development, commissioned a report on "Research Problems and Issues in the area of Socialization" from the Social Research Group of George Washington University. The first part of the report, by Sowder, deals with socialization determinants of intergroup and intragroup attitudes and behaviors, particularly in relation to ethnic and social class determinants. The second section, written by Lazar, is a policy analysis of the impact of various kinds of income support on the socialization of children. Part 1 includes more than 18 recommendations for further research in the summary, and the preceding chapters, still more extensive recommendations. I will highlight a few of these, and commend the book, which is available from Dr. Edith Grotberg of OCD, to those interested in both the findings from current research and directions for new projects. Sowder recommends research which (a) re-examines the issue of whether or not prejudice is

entirely learned, (b) through longitudinal studies traces the development of children's attitudes toward themselves and others, and the relationship between developmental processes and environmental influences thought to be related to formation of ethnic and social class behaviors, (c) clarifies when conformity behavior is and is not damaging to the child's development and to achievement of harmonious group relations, and (d) investigates effects of competition on child development, and the role which competition may play in hindering successful ethnic and social class mix in child care institutions. Many of the studies called for are experimental; others are longitudinal; and throughout, the dearth of information on non-Black minorities is noted. While the report is useful, the strong pull of race as the variable of concern relative to social class is evident in the more numerous discussions of ethnic variables rather than social class variables. Much of our social policy is based on social class rather than ethnicity. Or rather, how Federal money is collected and spent is often a function of income guidelines; national changes in policy and practices such as bussing, and hiring often are related to racial issues. Some writers have suggested that these be reversed, or rather that more policy and practice such as quota systems in hiring low-income persons be based on social class.

The recent Bureau of Labor Statistics report identifying the shocking plight of the sub-employed is likely to be as significant as Harrington's "The Other America" was for the 60's for the coming decade.

Another policy-shaping book, Jencks et al.'s "Inequality" (1972) also directs (focuses) attention on education, income and social status, rather than education and ethnicity. The findings draw attention to income inequities and their consequences. It seems likely that segregation by income in some programs will be replaced by broader government service to those now poorly served: the marginally poor and the sub-employed. Equally likely is a greater concern for equalization of opportunity and creation of a pluralistic society across income as well as racial lines.

My third point is related to this possible new national emphasis. Recent reviews of the literature and projections of educational futures increasingly point to socialization as a key variable for "success" in the year 2000. In the early childhood literature, this analysis often takes the form of recommending an emphasis on motivational rather than cognitive behavior. In examinations of educational reform, the emphasis is expressed in concern for the failure of transition from adolescence to adulthood, age segregation in schools, and the needs to socialize adolescents into the work ethnic and values of the adult culture. In studies of educational futures, this trend takes the form of predicting not the need for specific skills or occupations but the need to change, to be flexible, to learn how to learn, and to learn how to perceptively relate to and get along with others, which require a new role for the schools. It seems to me likely that socialization will be this decade's cognition, and that within a few years there will be symposia on socialization, books of readings, the whole scholarly apparatus.

The field of early child development long has been distinguished by a concern for social-emotional development, a concern which somehow has never resulted in full realization of the opportunity to meld research and practice offered by early childhood programs. Selection of the issues which seem most relevant to each preschool program, and a utilization of the opportunities available for program development with formative evaluation in the structured, powerful mode which contributed so much to Sesame Street could begin to redeem the promises of early childhood education in demonstrating how to foster socialization for all children.

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